

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a material handling system and method for a product to be manually processed by an operator (O) at a work-station (10). The material handling system (100) includes: batch delivery means (20) for automatically delivering batches of the product to the work-station (10) on an "as required" or "on demand" basis for manual processing by the operator; and packing container delivery means (60) for automatically delivering individual packing containers (61) to the work-station on an "as required" or "on demand" basis for filling with the product after manual processing by the operator. Each batch of product is typically supplied in a batch container (21) and the system may further include batch container dispatch means (40) for automatically dispatching the batch containers (21) from the work-station (10) on an "as required" or "on demand" basis after the operator has finished manually processing the product it contained. The system also typically includes packing container dispatch means (80) for automatically dispatching product-filled packing containers (61) from the work-station on an "as required" or "on demand" basis.